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Message Text

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43
ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01

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R 021307Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6350

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 3510

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IR
SUBJ: FORMER IRANIAN MINISTER COMMENTS ON HIS REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

SUMMARY: FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER MOHAMMAD SAM TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 30 THAT HIS REMOVAL AS MINISTER HAD BEEN ARRANGED BY LEADERS OF IRAN NOVIN PARTY WHO BELIEVED SAM HAD BEEN TOO LIBERAL IN PERMITTING FREER LOCAL ELECTIONS LAST NOVEMBER IN GORGAN AND EAST AZARBAIJAN. NEVERTHELESS, SAM SAID, AS RESULT OF THAT ELECTORAL EXPERIMENT SHAH HAD ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE THAT IN FUTURE ELECTIONS PEOPLE WOULD BE PERMITTED TO CHOOSE FREELY AMONG SEVERAL CLEARED CANDIDATES AND VICTORIOUS PARTY WOULD BE DECIDED SOLELY BY VOTES CAST. SAM REGARDS JAMSHID AMUZEGAR'S MOVE TO INTERIOR MINISTRY AS MORE LATERAL THAN DOWNWARD PRIMARILY BECAUSE HIS SUPERVISION OF FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS COULD BE SO IMPORTANT TO DEVELOPMENT OF REAL POLITCAL SYSTEM IN IRAN. END SUMMARY

1. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION AT HIS HOME APRIL 30, FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER HOMAMMAD SAM TOLD EMBOFF THAT HIS INSISTENCE ON FREER LOCAL ELECTION PROCEDURES IN GORGAN AND EAST AZARBAIJAN IN NOVEMBER, 1973, HAD LED TO HIS REMOVAL AT DEMAND OF IRAN NOVIN PARTY LEADERS. SAM CLAIMS LATTER HAD MISJUDGED DETER-MINATION OF SHAH WHO HAD DIRECTED THAT THOSE ELECTIONS NOT BE FIXED IN ADVANCE BETWEEN PARTY CHIEFS AS HAD BEEN USUAL PROACTICE, BUT THAT PEOPLE BE PERMITTED TO VOTE FREELY FOR
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THEIR CHOICE AMONG SEVERAL PREVIOUSLY CLEARED CANDIDATES OF

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BOTH PARTIES. ALTHOUGH HE IS ONE OF ORIGNIAL FOUNDERS OF
IRAN NOVIN PARTY, SAM SAYS HE ENFORCED SHAH'S DIRECTIVE
OVER STRENOUS OPPOSITION OF IRAN NOVIN LEADERS AND SOME
CABINET MEMBERS WHO PREDICTED LOCAL DISTURBANCES IF PLAN CARRIED
OUT. IRAN NOVIN CARRIED ELECTION ANYWAY BUT IN EAST AZARBAIJAN
BY ONLY 24,000 TO 15,600 WHICH SAM REGARDS AS TANTAMOUNT TO
DEFEAT FOR APRTY AFTER TEN YEARS IN OFFICE. SHAH HAD ORDERED
THAT ALL FUTURE ELECTIONS BE CONDUCTED IN SAME MANNER. SAM
BELIEVES IRAN NOVIN LEADERS NOW REALIZE MONARCH IS SERIOUS AND
THEY MUST CHOOSE LOCAL PARTY OFFICIALS AND CANDIDATES CAREFULLY
IF THEY WISH TO WIN IN 1975. NEVERTHELESS, ACCORDING TO SAM,
UNNAMED PARTY LEADERS COULD NOT FORGIVE WHAT THEY REGARDED
AS HIS DISLOYALTY TO PARTY AND INSISTED THAT PRIME MINISTER,
AS HEAD OF IRAN NOVIN PARTY, REMOVE HIM FROM OFFICE. SAM THINKS
HOVEYDA AND OTHER IRAN NOVIN LEADERS WERE SURPRISED WHEN
SHAH FILLED INTERIOR POST WITH AMUZEGAR WHO BELONGS TO NO PARTY.
IN SAM'S VIEW, SHIFT OF AMUZEGAR TO INTERIOR SHOULD BE SEEN AS
MORE LATERAL THAN DOWNWARD, SINCE ROLE AS ORGANIZER OF 1975
ELECTIONS WILL BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE FOR IRANIAN POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT.

2. SAM ALSO COMMENTED THAT SIZE AND ESPECIALLY TIMING OF CABINET
SHAKEUP WERE INFLUENCED BY RISING POPULAR DISCONTENT OVER IN-
FLATION AND FOOD SHORAGES. NOTING THAT RESHUFFLE HAD BOUGHT
GOI NO MORETHAN SIX TO EIGHT MONTJS'TIME, SAM SAID HE SAW
NO FINAL SOLUTION TO DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS DURING THAT PERIOD.

COMMENT: PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAJLES APRIL 30
THAT GOI IS DETERMINED THAT IRANIAN ELECTIONS BE FREE OF INTER-
FERENCE AND THAT AMUZEGAR'S APPOINTMENT REFLECTS THIS DETER-
MINATION LENDS CREDENCE TO SAM'S ASSERTIONS. IN ANY CASE,
ELECTORAL REFORMS DESVRIBED BY SAM IF IMPLEMENTED AND UNDER-
STOOD BY THE ELECTORATE WOULD ADD SIGNIFICANT SUBSTANCE TO CARE-
FULLY CONSTRUCTED FORMS OF DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL PROACTICE
IN IRAN. IF VOTE IN AZARBAIJAN IS INDICATION OF POPULAR FEELING,
CONTINUING DOMESTIC ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND CARELESS CHOICE
OF CANDIDATES COULD SPELL TROUBLE FOR IRAN NOVIN IN 1975.
HELMS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REMOVAL FROM OFFICE, POLITICAL LEADERS, ELECTIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TEHRAN03510
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740105-0425
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740578/aaaacsfs.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 AUG 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <14 JAN 2003 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FORMER IRANIAN MINISTER COMMENTS ON HIS REMOVAL FROM OFFICE SUMMARY: FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER MOHAMMAD SAM TOLD EMBOFF
TAGS: PINT, IR, (SAM, MOHAMMAD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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